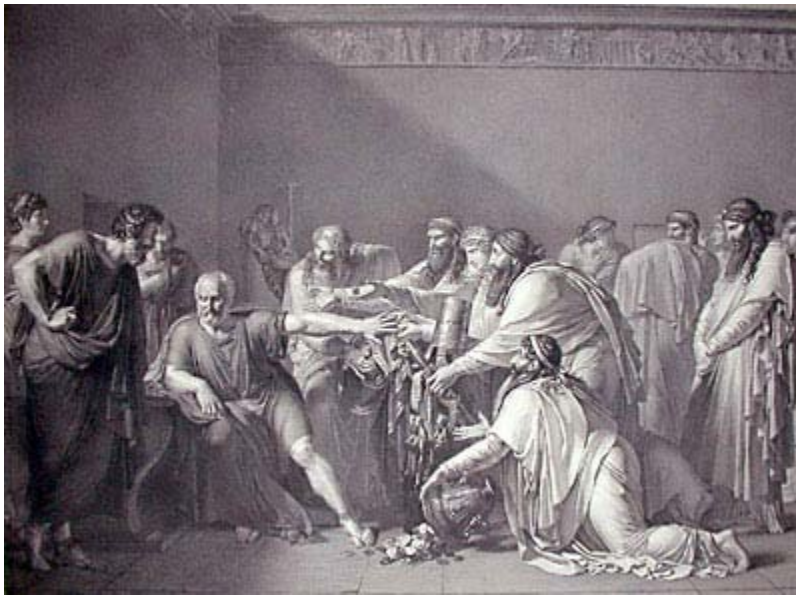


Quality, Quality, Quality

Michael J. Levi, DPM, *Vice President*
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California Board of Podiatric Medicine

The CPMA's annual "Western" at the Disneyland convention center is a time when the profession underscores its professionalism. The Board of Podiatric Medicine is part of this. We welcome the opportunity to spotlight shared values.

The State's concern is quality of care. It licenses professionals to use their training and competence to treat Californians with excellence, efficiency and respect.



Hippocrates Refusing Gift from Alexander. Anne-Louis Girodet de Roucy-Trioson, Paris (1816)

DPMs are licensed as lower extremity specialists. Scope of practice is a statement of what you may treat, not a restriction of what you can touch. That's common sense. And like other doctors, you are authorized to perform complete history and physical exams. What this includes, as with your treatment of the patient, is subject to the professional standard of care.

The standard of care is not set by bureaucratic regulators, but by the profession in its schools, graduate medical training, research and literature. The State does not substitute micromanaging regulations covering every eventuality for the good sense and judgment of the doctor. That is why licensing boards employ expert witnesses from the profession to testify about the standard of care.

Professionalism is something we use or lose. CPMA and the BPM have each supported the highest standards of patient care. The doctor-patient relationship, the doctor's respect of the patient's trust and welfare, is at the heart of matter.

Professionals work not to the limit of their scope, but to the extent of their competence and training within that scope and the standard of care. Likewise, the authority to conduct a full H&P, as indicated, is not a green light to routinely include procedures that may be appropriate once in a blue moon but are otherwise unnecessary, make patients uncomfortable, raise red flags to your peers, and result in malpractice, disciplinary action and criminal prosecution.

CPMA and BPM, within our separate spheres, have jointly raised the quality of podiatric medicine in California to an elite medical specialty. Licensing standards, the continuing competence program, the caliber of CME at the Western Podiatric Medical Congress, and the leadership of the CPMA Board and component societies contribute to this. Respect and trust from the community--and the decline in consumer complaints--attest to continuing progress in reaching for the highest professional ideals.

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